✽ THE TESTIM⊙NY ✽

People confronted with a beauty, a mystery or a horror beyond them

A fateplay role-playing game by Thomas Munier
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This GMless game lets you embody some characters that are confronted with a beauty, a mystery, or a horror beyond them.
Everyone needs to read the rules in full or be familiar with them.
Those **rules**, printed character **sheets**, **pens** and a few **tokens** are the only **material** requested.
No materials are requested if you use the variant mentioned at the end.

THE PHENOMENON

Calibrate yourselves about the **phenomenon** that your characters will witness : is this a **beauty**, a **horror** or a **mystery**?
Then **define** more precisely what this phenomenon is, in a word or two.

Here is a list of suggestions:

a conspiracy	clutter	innocence	parenthood
aids	completion	longing	the philosopher's stone
a genocide	cooking	love	piety
a god or goddess	the craving	magic	reality
a murder	death	mathematics	ruin
art	the fire	melancholy	silence
baseness	food	memory	simplicity
the body	future	nature	time
boredom	the grail	the night	to be a stranger to oneself
bureaucracy	the human monstrosity	oblivion	transformation
carnality	the identity of a person	old age	the truth of a person
cars	impairment	painting	vanity
childhood	indifference	paranoia	the void

Discuss the **context** in which the phenomenon will occur.

THE CHARACTERS

Then, each of you creates a character by defining:
✤ What they **appear to be**.
✤ Who they are **deep down**.
✤ Something they might **save**.
✤ Something they will **lose**.
✤ An **event** that they will live with another character, which will **deeply affect** them both.
Determine if you **reveal** those facts from the start or if you do it while playing. You may also **refrain** from defining things in advance, or **accept** that they might be called into question.

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PLAYING

Observe a **minute of silence**.
You may now begin the **adventure**.
Each of you tells what happens to their character and what they witness, how the phenomenon manifests. Bring in as many settings or extras as you need.
Focus on characters' **feelings** while facing the **phenomenon**. Even if the characters have a fight or a goal to lead, keep in mind that what matters most is the phenomenon and how the characters experience it. It is a game about **contemplation**, **dread** or **fascination**.

TIME AND SPACE

It's up to you to decide if your characters **meet** during the adventure or not.
Two characters may be shaken by the same event without being at the same place.
If your character **discovers**, **evokes** or **remembers** something that occurred in another place, tell it as if this thing were occurring, **in juxtaposition**, in the time and place where the character remembers the fact. In summary, juxtapose the evocation and the present's reality, as if time and space merged in a single point.
You may also play without caring about **chronological** order.

EMOTIONAL SAFETY

If someone is about to address a theme that disturbs you, **cross your arms** to alert that you want the theme to be avoided.

EMOTION TOKENS

Take a token from the common stock when:
✤ Your character feels a **strong emotion** (whether described or not);
✤ Your character experiences a **life-altering event** with another character;
✤ Your character is the subject of one of the following **verbs**:

to abandon	to discover	to flee	to revolt
to surrender	to deduce	to hallucinate	to feel powerless
to admire	to debate	to introspect	to suspect
to anticipate	to despair	to let go	to remember
to confess	to fail to understand	to deny	to speculate
to celebrate	to fail to describe	to forget	to surprise
to realize	to fail to grasp	to speak	to testify
to contemplate	to investigate	to regret	to be mistaken
to break down	to hope	to renounce	
to believe	to spy	to rest	

You may also take a token **afterwards** if you were too immersed to do it at the right time.
You may **give a token** from the common stock to another player if you feel that they forgot to take one despite meeting one of the conditions. They may refuse it and return it to the common stock.

MID-GAME AND END-GAME

When you have collected **three tokens** for your character, you may now, at any time, describe how they **saved** what they could save, or how they **lost** what they were destined to lose.
After **six tokens** gained, you may describe the second outcome. Stop taking tokens at this point.

You may also:
✤ avoid defining beforehand what your character will lose or save;
✤ say that they lost or saved nothing;
✤ say that they lost or saved something without more details;
✤ just recall something they lost or saved in the past, earlier in the adventure , or in their life.

The game **ends** when each player has described what their character lost and what they saved.
Each player may tell the **epilogue** of their character, the settings and the extras, before stopping.
For a shorter game, you may use 2x2 tokens or 2x1 token per player instead of 2x3.

MATERIAL-FREE VARIATION

Keep count in your head. Increase your total when:
✤ Your character feels a **strong emotion** (whether described or not). Strike your heart with your hand.
✤ Your character experiences a **life-altering event** with another character. Touch the hand of the concerned player.
✤ Your character **faces the phenomenon**. Clasp your hands together.

VARIATION WITH GAME MASTER

Someone volunteers to focus on the phenomenon's interventions, instead of embodying a character and taking tokens.
It allows the other to focus more deeply on their own characters.

FILMOGRAPHY

21 Grams, by Alejandro González Iñárritu
Magnolia, by Paul Thomas Anderson
The Trial, by Orson Welles
In the Electric Mist, by Bertrand Tavernier
Zodiac, by David Fincher
Salinui chueok (*Memories of Murder*), by Bong Joon-ho
Pi, by Darren Aronofsky
The Fountain, by Darren Aronofsky
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, by Steven Spielberg

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PLAYLIST

Dark music for dark roleplay

RESOURCES

The Testimony's webpage

People confronted with a beauty, a mystery or a horror beyond them

Character's sheet

You : the player
I / they : the character

1. Is the phenomenon we will face a beauty, a mystery or a horror?:
2. What is this phenomenon?:
3. Context:

4. Character's name:
5. Who I appear to be:
6. Who I am deep down:

(Items 7,8,9 can be filled beforehand, during the game, or left blank.
The content may also be changed during play)

7. What I will lose:
8. What I will save:
9. A life-altering event that I will experience with another character ( ):

10. **The game begins.** Describe what happens to your character or what they witness, and how the phenomenon manifests. Bring in as many settings or extras as you need.

Focus on what your character feels in the face of the phenomenon. Even if they have a combat or a goal to pursue, what matters is the phenomenon and how they experience it. This is a game about contemplation, dread, or fascination.

11. During the game, take an emotion token from the common stock for your character if:
✤ They feel a strong emotion.
✤ They are confronted by the phenomenon.
✤ They experience a life-altering event with another character.

12. You may give an emotion token from the common stock to another character if:
✤ They feel a strong emotion.
✤ They are confronted by the phenomenon.
✤ They experience a life-altering event with another character.

This token can be refused and returned to the common stock.

13. When someone offers you a token, you may also refuse it if you find it premature.

14. Potential emotion tokens you can accumulate:
If you plan to play for 1/2 h: O (Step 1) O (Step 2)
If you plan to play for 1 h: O O (Step 1) O O (Step 2)
If you plan to play for 2 h: O O O (Step 1) O O O (Step 2)

15. You reach Step 1 when you have collected half of your potential tokens: you may then describe (at your choice) how your character loses what they were meant to lose or how they save what they could save.

16. You reach Step 2 when you have collected all of your potential tokens: you may then describe how your character loses what they were meant to lose (if you already described what they saved) or how they save what they could save (if you already described what they lost). Then, narrate an epilogue for your character.